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EYES ONLY VIA MARTIN CHANNEL
SAIGON 0664 IMMEDIATE
DELIVER 008
JANUARY 17, 1975
TO: GENERAL BRENT SCOWCROFT
FROM: AMBASSADOR GRAHAM MARTIN
REF: WHITE HOUSE 50041

1. THANKS FOR YOUR MESSAGE. IT IS NICE TO KNOW THE ACTUAL DECISION EVEN IF IT IS THE WRONG ONE.

2. BUT A DECISION IS A DECISION. THE PRIMARY THING NOW IS TO MAKE IT WORK. I HOPE YOU LET US KNOW WHETHER THERE IS ANYTHING MORE WE CAN DO FROM HERE.

3. I ADD ONE LAST PREDICTION, WHICH I RARELY DO. YOU HAVE SAID THE $300 MILLION AMOUNT REPRESENTS THE "MAXIMUM THAT DOD SAID IT COULD NOW SUBSTANTIATE." THE ONLY WAY THAT CAN POSSIBLY BE TRUE IS TO ACCEPT ASSUMPTION OF COMBAT ACTIVITY RATES BASED ON RATES OF MUNITION EXPENDITURES LAST FALL WHICH, COMPELLED BY RVNAF'S NECESSARY AUSTERITY PROGRAM, GAVE THE INITIATIVE TO THE OTHER SIDE EVEN BEFORE THE RECENT ESCALATION OF COMBAT ACTIVITY.

4. AS SENATOR NUNN HAS SAID THE PENTAGON'S CREDIBILITY RATING ABOUT VIETNAM IS ZERO. BUT PRESIDENT FORD HAS A CLEAN SHEET. AND I VERY MUCH HOPE WE DON'T BLOT IT BY PERMITTING SUCH A STATEMENT BY DOD AS QUOTED ABOVE, TO BECOME PART OF THE PRESENTATION. IT WOULD BE FAR BETTER TO PUT THE FULL $700 MILLION ON THE TABLE AS THE REAL NEED, SAY WE ARE NOW ONLY ASKING FOR THE $300 MILLION ALREADY AUTHORIZED IN THE HOPE HANOI WILL CHANGE ITS MIND AND ABANDON THE MILITARY OPTION ON WHICH IT IS CLEARLY EMBARKED.

5. AT LEAST, THAT WAY THE STORY WOULD BE TRUE AND YOU WOULD NOT HAVE INVOLVED THE PRESIDENT IN THE "CREDIBILITY GAP" THAT WILL MOST CERTAINLY OCCUR IF THE $300 MILLION IS PRESENTED AS "THE MAXIMUM DOD SAYS IT CAN SUBSTANTIATE."

6. I AM NOT FIGHTING THE PROBLEM. THE DECISION HAS BEEN MADE. BUT I THINK I OWE IT TO THE PRESIDENT TO ADD THIS WORD OF CAUTION ON HOW THE PRESENTATION SHOULD BE MADE.

7. OFF TO JAKARTA TOMORROW TO BUCK UP THE INDONESIANS. WARMEST

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * WHSR COMMENT * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

HAK,SCOWCROFT,MCFARLANE,RODMAN,JANKA

RECALLED
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